REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending. Claims 1-4, and 6-8 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

In the December 10, 2003 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Nogami et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,207,885 (hereinafter the Nogami reference). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner objected to claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but indicated that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. By this amendment, the Applicants have rewritten in independent form, and slightly amended for sake of clarity, claims 2, 3, and 6 in accordance with the Examiner's remarks. Slightly amended claim 7 continues to depend from amended independent claim 6. The Applicants believe that rewritten independent claims 2, 3, and 6, and dependent claim 7 are in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 1 recites:

A time-axis compression/expansion method of time-axis compressing/expanding a multitrack sound source signal comprising a plurality of track sound source signals including a rhythm track sound source signal, comprising the steps of:

detecting positions of attacks of said rhythm track sound source signal of said plurality of track sound source signals;

subjecting portions of said rhythm track sound source signal between the detected positions of attacks to a first time-axis compression/expansion process; and

subjecting track sound source signals of said plurality of track sound source signals other than said rhythm track sound source signal to a second time-axis compression/expansion process, based on the detected positions of attacks of said rhythm track sound source signal.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by the Nogami reference. In so doing, the Examiner stated "Nogami et al. discloses a system and method for rendition control which comprises detecting positions of attacks of a rhythm track signal (Col. 4, lines 37-55), subjecting this track signal and others to a corresponding time-axis compression/expansion process (Abstract, Fig. 2), wherein the data regions read on the track sound source signals. "

The Nogami reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the method specified in independent claim 1. Unlike the method specified in independent claim 1, the Nogami reference does not show "**detecting positions of attacks** of said rhythm track sound source signal of said plurality of track sound source signals; subjecting **portions** of said rhythm track sound source signal between the **detected positions of attacks** to a first time-axis compression/expansion process".

The Nogami reference states "the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 compresses or expands the waveform data stored in the first waveform data region 100-1 on the time axis in accordance with the compression/expansion factor explained below and reproduces them." (Col. 8, lines 18-22.) The Nogami reference also states" If the compression/expansion factor is "1", the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 reproduces the waveform data without compressing or expanding them on the time axis. It follows that, in this case, the

reproduction tempo is the reproduction tempo of the original indicated by the original tempo information. If the compression/expansion factor is larger than "1", the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 reproduces the waveform data after compressing them on the time axis. It follows that, in this case, the reproduction tempo is faster than the reproduction tempo of the original indicated by the original tempo information. Conversely, if the compression/expansion factor is smaller than "1", the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 reproduces the waveform data after expanding them on the time axis. It follows that, in this case, the reproduction tempo is slower than the reproduction tempo of the original indicated by the original tempo information." (Col. 8, line 60 - col., 11.)

The Nogami reference basically teaches that the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 compresses or expands the waveform data on the time axis in accordance with a compression/expansion factor. The Nogami reference does not subject **portions of the waveform data**, determined by **detecting positions of attacks**, to compression/expansion. Rather, the time-axis compression/expansion processing means 200 compresses or expands all of the waveform data and not portions of the waveform data. The Nogami reference does not show "**detecting positions of attacks** of said rhythm track sound source signal of said plurality of track sound source signals; subjecting **portions of** said rhythm track sound source signal between **the detected positions of attacks** to a first time-axis compression/expansion process".

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 distinguishes over the above-cited reference.

Claims 4, 5, 8, and 9 recite limitations similar to independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claims 4, 5, 8, and 9 also distinguish over the above-cited reference for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants believe that the foregoing amendment and remarks place the application in condition for allowance, and a favorable action is respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 8, 2004

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